RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 22nd December, 1989/
1 Pausa, 1911 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Housing and Sanitation Facilities in Medium and Small Towns, etc.

*1. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR†

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are preparing a plan which envisages the improvement of housing and sanitation facilities in medium and small towns;

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the proposed plan; and

(c) what steps are being contemplated to improve the housing facilities in the metropolitan cities?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) In pursuance of the National Housing Policy, the Government is engaged in preparing a detailed plan for housing which will cover the shelter needs of small and medium towns also. Moreover, an initial exercise has been undertaken by a Working Group set up by the Planning Commission for formulating a plan of urban development covering sanitation in the medium and small towns. As far as improvement of sanitation facilities is concerned, the Government is implementing an ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns with a component of low cost sanitation. A scheme for the liberation of scavengers in 300 towns has been taken up. The State agencies are assisted in schemes for housing, water supply and sewerage from institutions like HUDCO and LIC.

(c) So far as metropolitan cities are concerned, some special schemes have been taken up in order to improve the housing situation in these cities:

(1) Centrally Sponsored Pavement Dwellers Scheme to provide shelter and other amenities.

(2) A special centrally financed scheme of Rs. 100 crores in Bombay for slum inprovement and redevelopment.

(3) Special allocation by the 9th Finance Commission to Bombay and Calcutta.

(4) Construction of houses and development of plots, improved amenities to slum dwellers and in low income neighbourhoods, and allotment of plots to Group Housing Societies.

(5) Additional Plan assistance through World Bank aided projects for Bombay, Calcutta and Madras for the increased provision of developed sites and urban amenities, with special emphasis on the poorer families.

(6) Major ongoing schemes for environmental improvment of slums by State and municipal agencies.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Hon. Chairman, Sir, it is being observed that the basic amenities like water, electricity, sanitation etc. are not being provided in different areas, particularly the areas of Delhi which

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhagatram Manhar.

are across the Jamuna. So is the case with other metropolitan cities. For want of these facilities the settlers are facing a lot of problems.

There has been acute shortage of houses in the metropolitan cities, particularly in Delhi and Bombay. The land-use controls, tenure rules and other laws and land ceiling regulations are coming in the way of construction of houses. Therefore, I want to know what specific steps the Government is contemplating to eliminate such laws which come in the way of construction of houses by low-income group persons.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, the question is very comprehensive. In our manifesto we have clearly said that the focus of urban development would be shifted from the four metropolitan cities and medium and big cities to thousands of small and medium towns. So also other parties like the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India and the B. J. P. have all laid emphasis on small and medium townships to prevent overcrowding of the metropolitan cities.

Already the previous Government has initiated a lot of steps in this direction. Mention must be made about integrated development of small and medium towns, the scavenger liberation programme and the low-cost sanitation programme.

Sir, the problem is not so simple. As you know, the population of India during the last four decades has doubled. But the urban population has quadrupled. In fact, in 2001 the urban population will be to the extent of 350 million. That means the urban population of India will be equal to the population of the USA and the USSR both combined. We are facing a very tough situation. So, I can only tell the hon. Minister. hon. Member that we do our best to improve the situation. (*Interruptions*) Because I had always been a Member sitting on the other side and not a Minister, by sheer force of habit I said that.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He will fulfil his wishes very soon.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Sir, my question was specific, and he has not replied to it. There are some laws, rules and regulations which are coming in the way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question was about urban ceiling. You want him to consider that. What is your question really? You are asking on urban ceiling also.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Not ceiling, but urban housing. The rules and regulations are coming in the way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is coming in the way?

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: I have specifically said that laws and regulations and urban land ceilings are coming in the way.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Perhaps he means the Urban Land Ceilings Act.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: That is what I asked.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: The Commission on Urbanisation headed by Mr. Correa, has also referred to it. In the preliminary report it said it should be amended, but in the final report it has not categorically stated anything. So, we have to have a second look, if necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will consider it.

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: The cost of construction of houses and the cost of land has gone up considerably during the past few years. It is now beyond the reach of the common man to have a house or land in metropolitan cities. I

would, therefore, like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry will promote lower cost construction by way of housing finance network. If so, what are the details thereof? And if not, what other steps the Government propose to take to help the poor in construction of houses and allotment of land for housing?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: There is a scheme for improving the habitat and improving the conditions in the slums. I agree with the hon. Member that the cost of construction is going up. I would say the Ministry has appointed a cell and the Planning Commission had also created an expert committee to go into the problem to find out whether alternative materials can be made available at the same cost. The exercise is going on.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: So far as the housing problem is concerned, the Front Government and all supporting parties have expressed in their manifestoes to provide house for all. Therefore, I would like to know how many dwelling units will be built or are proposed to be built every year to wipe out the shortage of 13 million houses in small, medium and metropolitan towns?

Part (b) of my question is: will the Government consider development of local and indigenous materials for providing inexpensive houses to the vast majority of the people living in villages and cities? If so, what are the recommendations of the working group or your planning body which is dealing with this and how will you fulfil your obligations as you have said in your manifestoes?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: I am not in a position to give the figures he has asked, but I will communicate to him very soon.

Regarding the building materials, the exercise is not over. *Prima facie* they have identified where there would be any shortages in the next five years. Regarding cement they have found out that there would not be any major shortage, but the other things they have not gone into and all out measures will be taken.

SHRI T. R. BALU: It is my unique privilege to put a question to my Guru. The hon. Minister is aware of the fact that the cities are very much crowded with slums. Therefore, slum clearance by providing housing facilities is imperative. But I may point out that the State Governments are not in a position to meet the entire expenditure on slum improvement schemes. In Madras specially, the amount that the State Government has been alloting on slum clearance is not quite sufficient to meet the growing needs. The hon. Minister has accepted in his Statement that the Centre has sanctioned special grants to a few cities like Calcutta and Bombay through the Ninth Finance Commission, but the city of Madras was neglected by the previous Government and no sanction was accorded to it even on the eve of tricentenary celeberations of the Madras city. So, part (a) of my question is: will this new Government come forward to accord special grant to the city of Madras as it has sanctioned to Calcutta and Bombay? Part (b) of the question is: Is there any proposal to assist the Madras City by Centrally assisted schemes as has been done in the case of Bombay?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, my *shishya* has put me in a delicate situation.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: His *shishya* or *shisha*?

...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, the hon. Member wanted to know how a sum of Rs. 100 crores has been given as Central assistance to Bombay. When the former Prime Minister went to Bombay he announced

that grant. I would say there is nothing wrong in that because the present Finance Minister who also hails from Maharashtra will not object to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us leave out States... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: The question is regarding grant of Rs. 100 crores to Bombay. Naturally, if that is approved, other metropolitan cities can also follow suit if their claims are justifiable and if there are enough funds, I think, that will be looked into.

Regarding Calcutta, it is a different cup of tea because the Finance Commission granted that amount on the basis of some kind of representation. I do not have further information on that.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Regarding Madras, he did not say anything.

SHRI T. R. BALU: Sir, the Finance Commission has given Rs. 50 crores each to Calcutta and Bombay. I want to know whether the same amount would be given to Madras also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will see to it.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, it is the sweet will of the Finance Commission to do so. It is for the Finance Commission to decide.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, the hon. Minister has said just now that in their manifesto the emphasis has been shifted from the large metropolitan cities to smaller and medium cities. Therefore, I want to ask about Madras.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is Madras a medium city?

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: No, Sir, it is a metropolis. He said that they are going to shift the emphasis from the metropolitan cities to smaller and medium cities. I also want to contradict what the hon. Member who spoke just before me said that the previous government had not made any allotment for the pavement dwellers in Madras city. In fact, a sum of Rs. 89.88 lakhs was set aside for the pavement dwellers in Madras city. (a) I want to know how much of that amount has been spent by the State Government in Madras over the last year?

(b) Now in the Eighth Plan document is any such allotment is going to be made for Madras city or are they going to discontinue it?

(c) How much investment do they propose to make for housing in the Eighth Plan? As you know Sir, in the Seventh Plan Rs. 30,000 crores has been set aside for housing but in the Eighth Plan even the HFDC estimate says that we need Rs. 80,000 crores for housing. It is a very conservative estimate. I want to know how much is proposed to be set aside for housing in the Eighth Plan?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are formulating the Eighth Plan.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, as you answered the second question, the Eighth Plan is in the formulation stage.

The hon. lady Member asked about the slum/pavement dwellers rehabilitation programme. Sir, for example, in Madras, the number of beneficiaries is 3,147 households, the amount spent was Rs. 125.6 lakhs.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: The Minister mentioned that there is a tremendous pressure on population in urban areas. We appreciate that problem and we realise that urban services of all kinds are under severe stress. Three particular areas, housing, urban transportation and sanitation need pointed attention. I would like to know from the hon. Minister

in order to ameliorate the problem of housing shortage, whether the Government is proposing to involve private builders in metropolitan cities for accelerated construction of dwelling units.

(b) For purposes of transportation facilities, will the rapid transport system be taken on a priority basis? Here I might add, one of the senior Ministers of the Government has said that some of the programmes which we have already on the agenda are off the agenda. Is it a fact and if it is a fact, what is the alternative that is being planned for introducing the rapid transit system?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not his portfolio.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: Sir, I am talking of the urban transportation. The problem of sanitation is getting out of hand. Is the Government proposing to bring mechanisation as an aid towards effective sanitation management in our research?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, the hon. Member's first question is, whether the private sector will be involved in construction of houses. The answer is yes, because the Government alone cannot take this burden. For example, Sir, the total inflow of funds from the budgetary outlays, financial institutions HUDCO and the public sector agencies was of the order of Rs. 2,165 crores in 1987-88. As compared to this the private sector outlay is placed at about Rs. 8,900 crores during 1987-88. So, without private sector entrepreneurship which is playing a crucial role, we cannot complete our programme. Regarding urban transportation, this subject has been tarnsferred to this Ministry only recently.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does it come under your Ministry?

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Yes Sir. But even though it has come to my Ministry, the necessary finances have not so far come. That is the problem. The Planning Commission has constituted certain working groups on urban development, urban transportation and urban water supply. So, we are awaiting the response from the Planning Commission.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister, while replying to the supplementaries put by my colleagues has, *inter alia*, mentioned about the Charles Correa Committee's report regarding the urban development and as far as I know, the Charles Correa Committee had suggested and had made out a plan for improvement of the Calcutta city. Accordingly, the Mayor of Calcutta had met the erstwhile Prime Minister along with certain M.Ps and M.L.As and the Calcutta Citizens' Council, headed by me had met the Prime Minister and had submitted a memorndum because the Charles Corea Committee was constituted by the erstwhile Government. But the erstwhile Government did not find time to go through the recommendations of that Committee nor through the memorndum submitted by us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Come to your point.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: My question to the hon. Minister is, whether the hon. Minister will look into that memorandum and assure us that what the erstwhile Government could not do for Calcutta, the new Government will do for the improvement of Calcutta.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, we all know, what we actually call the cry of Calcutta or the agony of Calcutta because it is such a gigantic problem. As the hon. Member has stated, I have not as yet looked into the memorandum. We will definitely look into it and do the needful.